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PT07886

RELEASED IN PART  
B1, 1.4(D)

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ACTION WHA-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	CEA-01	CIAE-00	COME-00	CTME-00
	INL-00	DODE-00	DOEE-00	DOTE-00	PERC-00	SRPP-00	DS-00
	EAP-00	EB-00	EXIM-01	E-00	FAAE-00	VC-00	FRB-00
	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	ITC-01	LAB-01	L-00	VCE-00
	AC-01	DCP-01	NRRC-00	NSAE-00	OMB-01	DHS-00	OPIC-01
	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	IRM-00
	SSO-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00
	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/011W		

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R 141249Z NOV 02  
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8502  
INFO AMEMBASSY LIMA  
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
NSC WASHDC  
USCINCSO MIAMI FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CARACAS 003582

NSC FOR LLORENS  
USCINCSO ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/13/2012  
TAGS: PGOV, ECON, VE  
SUBJECT: POLITICAL-ECONOMIC UPDATE: NOVEMBER 13, 2002

CLASSIFIED BY: AMBASSADOR CHARLES S. SHAPIRO: REASON 1.5 (B) (D).  
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SUMMARY  
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1. (C) HAND GRENADES EXPLODED AT FEDECAMERAS AND THE VENEZUELAN WORKERS CONFEDERATION (CTV) HEADQUARTERS NOVEMBER 10. NO ONE WAS INJURED IN WHAT THE ORGANIZATIONS CALLED ACTS OF TERRORISM AND VANDALISM. NATIONAL ELECTORAL COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS ANNOUNCED NOVEMBER 11 THAT ALFREDO AVELLA HAS BEEN NAMED AS THE BOARD'S NEW PRESIDENT. AVELLA SAID THE BOARD HAS AS ITS FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS TO REVIEW THE QUESTION OF THE CONSULTATIVE REFERENDUM. PDVSA ADMINISTRATIVE EMPLOYEES HELD A LUNCH HOUR RALLY ON NOVEMBER

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11 TO PROTEST THE CONTINUED POLITICIZATION OF THEIR  
ORGANIZATION.

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AGRICULTURE MINISTER EFREN

ANDRADES RESPONDED TO LOCAL PRESS NOVEMBER 13 DENYING U.S.  
CLAIMS THAT VENEZUELA HAS PLACED AGRICULTURAL IMPORT  
RESTRICTIONS ON NON-DOMESTIC CORN. END SUMMARY.

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GRENADES BLAST UNION AND BUSINESS FEDERATION HEADQUARTERS,  
CARDINAL'S HOME  
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2. (U) TWO GRENADES EXPLODED AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE  
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VENEZUELAN WORKERS CONFEDERATION (CTV) AND VENEZUELAN  
FEDERATION OF ASSOCIATIONS AND CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND  
INDUSTRY (FEDECAMERAS) NOVEMBER 10. THE FIRST EXPLOSION AT  
THE CTV HEADQUARTERS WAS CAUSED BY A FRAGMENTATION GRENADE,  
AND OCCURRED AT APPROXIMATELY 12:40, ACCORDING TO CTV  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY GENERAL PEDRO MORENO. A HALF AN HOUR  
LATER, THE SECOND DEVICE EXPLODED AT THE FEDECAMERAS  
BUILDING. NO ONE WAS KILLED OR INJURED IN THE EXPLOSIONS.  
ANTI-EXPLOSIVES UNIT OF THE DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE AND  
PREVENTION SERVICES (DISIP) IS INVESTIGATING THE INCIDENTS.

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4. (U) A GRENADE ALSO EXPLODED NOVEMBER 12 AT THE HOME OF  
VENEZUELA'S ARCHBISHOP, CARDINAL IGNACIO VELASCO. NO ONE WAS

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HURT IN THE ATTACK, AND NO ONE IS CLAIMING RESPONSIBILITY.

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CHURCH OFFICIALS CONDEMNED THE ATTACK.

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CNE NAMES NEW PRESIDENT  
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5. (C) AFTER THREE DAYS OF NEGOTIATIONS, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE NATIONAL ELECTORAL COUNCIL (CNE) ANNOUNCED NOVEMBER 11 THAT ALFREDO AVELLO WILL BE ITS NEW PRESIDENT, REPLACING ROBERTO RUIZ, WHO RESIGNED NOVEMBER 7. THREE OF THE REMAINING FOUR MEMBERS OF THE CNE'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS MADE THE DECISION IN A CLOSED MEETING, AFTER ONE BOARD MEMBER, ROMULO RANGEL, WALKED OUT, PROTESTING THE BOARD'S "MAJORITY RULE" DECISION-MAKING PROCESS. RANGEL SAID HE WILL NOT RESIGN FROM THE BOARD, BUT WILL NOT ATTEND ANYMORE MEETINGS UNTIL THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SELECTS A NEW CNE.

6. (C) MEANWHILE, LEONARDO PIZANI, WHO STEPPED DOWN FROM THE BOARD IN 2000, ANNOUNCED NOVEMBER 11 THAT HE IS WITHDRAWING HIS RESIGNATION. HE CLAIMS THAT SINCE THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY NEVER FORMALLY ACCEPTED HIS RESIGNATION, HE HAS THE RIGHT TO REASSUME HIS POSITION, JUST AS RANGEL DID. RANGEL SUBMITTED HIS RESIGNATION IN APRIL 2002, BUT THEN LATER WITHDREW IT. THE CNE BOARD IS STUDYING PIZANI'S REINCORPORATION.

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ACTION WHA-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	CEA-01	CIAE-00	COME-00	CTME-00
	DODE-00	DOEE-00	DOTE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EAP-00	EB-00
	EXIM-01	E-00	FAAE-00	VC-00	FRB-00	H-01	TEDE-00
	INR-00	ITC-01	LAB-01	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NRRC-00
	NSAE-00	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00
	P-00	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00
	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00

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R 141249Z NOV 02  
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8503

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INFO AMEMBASSY LIMA  
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
NSC WASHDC  
USCINCSO MIAMI FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 CARACAS 003582

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PDVSA WORKERS PROTEST

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7. (C) ADMINISTRATIVE WORKERS AT PDVSA HEADQUARTERS AND IN ZULIA STATE USED THEIR LUNCH HOUR NOVEMBER 11 AND 12 TO PROTEST WHAT THEY CALL THE POLITICIZATION OF THE INDUSTRY. THIS ACTION REPORTEDLY STEMMED, AT LEAST IN PART, FROM THE ALLEGED USE OVER THE WEEKEND OF PDVSA VIDEO CONFERENCING FACILITIES BY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MVR AND BOLIVARIAN CIRCLES. WHILE PDVSA PRESIDENT ALI RODRIGUEZ STATED THAT THEY HAD ONLY BEEN DISCUSSING SOCIAL PROGRAMS, A PDVSA PRESS RELEASE OF NOVEMBER 11 STRESSES THAT THE COMPANY MUST CONSIDER THE USE OF ITS FACILITIES FOR ACTIVITIES THAT ARE NOT WITHIN THE COMPANY'S MISSION STATEMENT. THE PROTESTERS DEMANDED A RETURN TO "MERITOCRACY," AND CALLED FOR THE REMOVAL OF PRO-GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS IN KEY PDVSA POSITIONS, WHO THEY CLAIM ARE USING THEIR OFFICES TO FUNNEL PDVSA EARNINGS TO BOLIVARIAN CIRCLES. THE PROTESTERS ALSO DEMAND THAT NO RETRIBUTION BE TAKEN AGAINST EDGAR QUIJANO, A PDVSA MANAGER WHO JOINED THE PLAZA FRANCIA PROTESTS TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST THE CHAVEZ GOVERNMENT.

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AG MINISTER DENIES IMPORT RESTRICTIONS  
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11. (C) MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, EFREN ANDRADES, RESPONDED  
[REDACTED] IN THE LOCAL PRESS TO NEWS THAT THE USTR IS  
REQUESTING DISPUTE SETTLEMENT CONSULTATIONS WITH VENEZUELA AT  
THE WTO. ANDRADES CLAIMED THE CASE WAS BASELESS, CALLING  
U.S. ACCUSATIONS OF AGRICULTURAL IMPORT RESTRICTIONS  
EXAGGERATED. THE MINISTER DID ADMIT THAT IMPORTS OF CORN  
FROM THE U.S. HAD DECREASED IN 2002 COMPARED TO PRIOR YEARS;  
HOWEVER, HE ATTRIBUTED THAT FACT TO THE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE  
OF DOMESTIC CORN. ACCORDING TO USDA FIGURES, CORN IMPORT  
LICENSES WERE SO RESTRICTED THIS YEAR IT IS UNLIKELY IMPORTS  
REACHED THE MINIMUM TARIFF RATE QUOTA (TRQ) OF 583, 000 TONS.

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